

The Eagle

Newsletter for Veterans, Stakeholders, and Employees of the
Coatesville VA Medical Center



Winter 2023

PACT-Act

On October 1, 2022, the VA expanded the eligibility for VA health care for certain Veterans as part of the PACT Act implementation. The PACT Act includes exposures to a wide variety of agents, including nuclear, chemical, and physical (such as sound, vibration, noise, and x-rays) that are part of the military environment. This expansion will increase health care eligibility for hundreds of thousands of toxic-exposed Veterans.

Veterans will be in one of three established categories:

Category 1 Veterans who participated in a toxic exposure risk activity, as defined by law, while serving on active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty training

Category 2 Veterans who were assigned to a duty station in (including airspace) certain locations during specific periods of time:

- ◆ On or after August 2, 1990, in the following countries: Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, or the United Arab Emirates
- ◆ On or after September 11, 2001, in the following countries: Afghanistan, Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, Uzbekistan, or any other country determined relevant by VA

Category 3 Veterans who were deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Freedom's Sentinel, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation New Dawn, Operation Inherent Resolve, and Resolute Support Mission.

Veterans who served in the following locations and time periods are also eligible to enroll in VA health care effective on enactment (August 10, 2022):

- **Republic of Vietnam** (between January 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975),
- **Thailand at any US or Royal Thai base** (between January 9, 1962, and June 30, 1976)
- **Laos** (between December 1, 1965, and September 30, 1969)
- **Certain Provinces in Cambodia** (between April 16, 1969, and April 30, 1969)
- **Guam or American Samoa or their territorial waters** (between January 9, 1962, and July 31, 1980)
- **Johnston Atoll, or a ship that called there**, between January 1, 1972, and September 30, 1977

Some examples of Toxic Exposures include:

Chemicals

Herbicides (Agent Orange) used during Vietnam era, burn pits, sulfur fire in Iraq, Cam Lejeune water supplies, pesticides used during Gulf War, depleted uranium, industrial

Air Pollutants

Burn pits, oil well fire during Gulf War, sulfur fire in Iraq, Atsugi (Japan) waste incinerator, sand, dust, and very small, fine particles or liquid droplets

Occupational Hazards

Asbestos, industrial solvents, lead, radiation, vibration, noise, fuels, polychlorinated biphenyl (PCBs), and special paint used on military vehicles

Radiation

Nuclear weapons and testing, x-rays, depleted uranium

Warfare Agents

Chemical weapons, Project 122/Project Shipboard Hazard and Defense (SHAD), herbicide tests and storage, and chemical experiments

To find out if you are eligible visit:

- www.va.gov/PACT
- www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/burnpits/registry.asp

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
Coatesville VA Medical Center

COMPENSATION & PENSION EXAM, TOXIC EXPOSURE SCREENING, AND REGISTRY EXAMS

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

With the new toxic exposure screening required by section 603 of the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act of 2022 (the PACT Act), Veterans may have some questions about which exams and screenings they need, when they need them, and what purposes these exams and screenings serve. This comparison chart breaks down some key differences:

EVALUATION TYPE	PURPOSE	DESCRIPTION
 Compensation and Pension (C&P) Exam	Part of the claim decision process to help determine service connection and rate a disability for purposes of compensation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Exams administered as part of the VBA claims process but performed by VHA or contracted providers. » Enrollment in VA care is not required to receive VA benefits, but the exams may provide a basis for eligibility to enroll in VA care.
 Toxic Exposure Screening	<p>Helps identify Veterans with exposure concerns and advises them how to connect with benefits, resources, and services.</p> <p>Not part of the VA benefits claims process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » VA must offer the toxic exposure screening to all enrolled Veterans as required by section 603 of the PACT Act. » The screening will be repeated at least once every 5 years. » Screenings will take 5-10 minutes. » If a Veteran has exposure concerns, VA staff will provide them with additional information and resources and advise them on next steps.
 Registry Evaluation	<p>Information collected is used for research and quality improvement purposes and is not for clinical care, nor to determine eligibility for health care or benefits.</p> <p>For more information, visit www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » VA has six registries: Agent Orange, Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pits, Depleted Uranium, Gulf War, Ionizing Radiation, and Toxic Embedded Fragments. » VA's health registry evaluations are free, voluntary medical assessments for Veterans who may have been exposed to certain environmental hazards during military service. » There is no requirement to be enrolled in VA health care or receive other VA benefits to participate in a registry. » Exams take approximately 60 minutes and are performed by a VA or military health provider. Veterans can contact the nearest local VA medical facility Environmental Health Coordinator about getting a registry evaluation.
 Million Veteran Program (MVP)	Information collected is used for research, not for clinical care or to determine eligibility for health care or benefits. No direct, in-person toxic exposure screening is involved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » VA will use information to learn how genes, lifestyle, and military experiences and exposures affect health. » Participants provide informed consent, a blood sample, and secure access to their health records with MVP. » There is no requirement to be enrolled in VA health care to enroll in MVP. Participation is entirely voluntary. » Join online at mvp.va.gov or call 866-441-6075 to schedule an appointment.



For more information visit:

www.va.gov/PACT

v11.8.22



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Beneficiary Travel

The Beneficiary Travel Self-Service System (BTSSS) is an online, 24 hour self-reporting system to file a claim and process travel expenses, to reimburse Veterans for their approved health care appointments. Access to the BTSSS is through the "AccessVA" travel claim portal or call 1-855-574-7292 from 7am-7pm, M-F, for additional help or details.

Claims must be filed within 30 days of the appointment.

VETERANS, at least one of these needs to be true to be eligible for reimbursement

You're traveling for care at a VA health facility or for VA-approved care at a non-VA health facility in your community

You have a VA disability rating of 30% or higher, or

You're traveling for treatment of a service-connected condition, even if your VA disability rating is less than 30%, or

You receive a VA pension, or

You have an income that's below the maximum annual VA pension rate, or

You can't afford to pay for your travel, as defined by our guidelines

CAREGIVERS, at least one of these needs to be true to be eligible for reimbursement

The person is your family caregiver under the National Caregiver Program traveling to receive caregiver training or to support your care, or

The person is your medically required attendant traveling with you to support your care, or

The person is your transplant care donor or support person



Check out the Veterans Health Library

Do you need help making an important health care decision?

Staying healthy allows you to focus on what's important.

Be Prepared to talk to your doctor about what matters to you.

Visit veteranshealthlibrary.va.gov to learn more about managing your health.



The VHL is an online resource available 24/7 for Veterans to help stay healthy and informed. Information is regularly updated by VA subject matter experts and medical staff.

It features Veteran-specific topics and direct links to information most searched for, that are easy to access, read and comprehend.

VHL content includes:

- Printable health and medical information sheets, in both English and Spanish
- Instruction guides (such as how to take your blood pressure)
- More than 175 videos

For questions, please reach out to Christine Ebersole at 610-384-7711 ext. 2285

Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregiver program



VA launched a second phase of the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC), by expanding the program **to include caregivers of eligible Veterans of all service eras.**

To be eligible for PCAFC, the Veteran must have a serious injury (or illness), which is a single or combined service-connected disability rating of 70% or more and meet additional criteria. For details, please reach out to our Caregiver Support Program Coordinator at 610-384-7711, ext. 2917.

COVID-19 Vaccines/Boosters

All Veterans and individuals eligible under the SAVE LIVES Act may call 610-383-0239 to schedule a COVID-19 vaccination appointment.



Flu Vaccination

Get the flu vaccination during a scheduled medical appointment or call 610-383-0239 to schedule an appointment for the flu shot.

Eligible Veterans can also receive a no-cost seasonal flu shot at Community Care Network (CCN) retail pharmacies or urgent care locations. Find your nearest in-network community location at www.va.gov/find-locations.

Connect with us at www.va.gov/coatesville-health-care and on Facebook



For updates about our medical center operations, please view the **"Alert" & "Local Alerts"** section on our website www.va.gov/coatesville-health-care

